



**Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service
Scientist Professional Advisory Committee**



**Scientist Category Handbook:
Commissioned Corps Awards**

Last Updated: July 2019

Overview

- The purpose of the Commissioned Officer's Awards Program, established in 1961, is to: (a) recognize officers for outstanding achievement or service; (b) encourage maximum performance; and (c) improve esprit de corps among officers.
- There are several different award types including: Individual Honor Awards, Unit Honor Awards, and Service Awards. Commissioned Corps officers are not eligible for cash awards. Factors to consider when selecting an appropriate award level include: (a) scope of impact; (b) magnitude of achievement; (c) leadership; (d) length of time; and (e) valor. More details on USPHS awards and guidance for determining the appropriate level of an award can be found at:
https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_award_criteria_m.aspx or
<https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/PAM67.pdf>
- Current official guidance on the Awards Program was disseminated 11 January 2017: http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC511_01.pdf. This guidance describes all USPHS Commissioned Corps awards, including Individual Honor Awards, Unit Honor Awards, Service Awards, Campaign Medals, Training Ribbons, the Regular Corps Ribbon, Badges and Insignia, and responsibilities and procedures in the award process.
- Award nominations may be prepared by an officer's supervisor or any other colleague (civilian or Commissioned Corps officer) who is knowledgeable about the work performed. Officers are also encouraged to be proactive in obtaining awards given that awards play an important role in promotions and reflect career development. Officers can request that their outstanding performance in a specific project or completed task be considered for an award.
- There is no limit to the number of awards an officer can earn in a given time frame. However, officers should strive to achieve awards regularly, achieving higher level awards as they progress through their career.
- An officer cannot receive both a Unit and Individual Award for the same activity unless the officer "demonstrated a level of accomplishment that significantly exceeds the efforts of other members of the unit" and the unit nomination precedes the individual nomination.
- Nomination procedures for honor awards must include three items: (1) a correctly completed PHS 6342-1 (http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/PHS-6342-1.pdf) for Unit Honor Awards, or 6342-2 (http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/PDF_docs/PHS-6342-2.pdf) for Individual Honor Awards and (2) a correctly formatted narrative of no more than two pages. Specific agencies may require additional material with each nomination; you should consult your Awards Board Chair or other representative. Each must be

formally initiated within 13 months after the noteworthy act or specific period of service to be recognized has been completed.

- Service awards may be initiated at any time after the criteria for the award has been met and follow a separate nomination process. They are processed in batch submissions. Agencies submit eligible officers quarterly for agency earned awards. RedDOG submits the final eligible list for deployment related service awards upon completion of the deployment and required approvals. Exceptions will be those awards received upon graduation from Officer Basic Course (OBC). Again, these must go through final awards processing.
- Check your Agency for guidance on how to write a successful award nomination.

Ribbon Wear and Procurement

- Award ribbons are worn on the left breast of an appropriate uniform in a specified order. Photos of PHS ribbons, in order of precedence, can be found at:
https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/bulletin/awards_poster_m.aspx
- Several websites have been developed to help officers “build their rack” or determine the proper order of earned award ribbons. However, we have found only one that includes Public Health Service for rack building:
<http://www.ultrathin.com/rackbuilder.htm>.¹
- Awards can also be purchased from the Navy Exchange:
 - <https://www.vanguardmil.com/collections/public-health-service>
 - <https://www.mynavyexchange.com/nex/uniforms>
 - <https://www.ultrathin.com/>

Additional Resources

- Commissioned Officer’s Award Program (COAP) Frequently Asked Questions
https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_frequently_asked_questions_m.aspx
- CDC Guidance on Writing Nominations
http://intranet.cdc.gov/od/hcrmo/html/hcrmo/awards_ccmain.html
- FDA Awards Nomination Process
<http://inside.fda.gov:9003/EmployeeResources/CommissionedCorps/OfficeofCommissionedCorpsAffairsOCCA/FDACommissionedCorpsAwardsProgram/default.htm>

¹ SciPAC does not endorse purchase of products from any particular vendor. Inclusion of product websites is only for informational purposes.

- NIH Awards Nomination Process
<http://hr.od.nih.gov/hrguidance/corps/awards/default.htm>

It is recommended that you check that all guidance is up-to-date before submitting any awards.